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III.—*APĀM NAPĀT* AGAIN.

There has recently appeared in the *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, III. Band, 1. Heft, pp. 18-51, a very interesting article on the Indo-Iranian deity *Apām Napāt*, by Mr. Louis H. Gray, of Columbia University. In this article, citing numerous passages in support of his view, Mr. Gray argues with considerable force that *Apām Napāt* was originally a water deity.

In two brief articles dealing with the same subject, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, vol. XIX, pp. 137-50, I have already expressed the opinion that the Hindu *Apām Napāt* was originally a lightning deity, and that he became absorbed by *Agni* in Vedic times. While these two views are apparently contradictory, they are by no means irreconcilable—indeed, they may readily be brought together upon common ground. It is simply a question of one's point of view. To my own mind, the problem presented is this: What was the natural phenomenon, if any, upon which the Indo-Iranian deity called *Apām Napāt* by the Hindus, was based? Mr. Gray has taken up the question from quite a different standpoint, and his problem may be stated in the form, What was the Indo-Iranian view of the nature of the Avestan deity *Apām Napāt*? In other words, one paper has to do with the native view of the nature of the deity, while the other two, my own, deal with the question, What was the actual nature of the object or phenomenon worshiped as a deity under this name?

It thus becomes evident that the deity in question may have been a lightning deity in reality, though it may have been regarded by its native worshipers as a water deity. That the Hindu *Apām Napāt* originally had none of the attributes of a fire god, I have long been satisfied: that he was looked upon in the early days as a water god, I can readily believe; and yet that he was after all, in the last analysis, originally a lightning god pure and simple—i. e. that the Indo-Iranians, while doubtless supposing themselves to be worshiping a water god, were in reality actually worshiping the lightning's bolt—I am more convinced than ever, after reading the new evidence brought forward in the article already cited.

It has been my good fortune to be able to study the thunderstorm in ten different States of the Union. As a child, living in Maine and Massachusetts, I felt a sort of unreasoning terror of the comparatively mild New England storms. This was soon taken out of me, later on, by the terrific thunder and lightning of Central Iowa; and the thunderstorm became an exceedingly interesting natural phenomenon. In the Northern Mississippi Valley, on the Western Plains, and possibly also, in spite of its forests, in Northern Michigan, with all of which I am familiar, the climatic conditions must resemble somewhat those of the extensive region in which the Indo-Iranians are supposed to have lived and wandered. In any case, it is sufficiently clear that the country to the north of the Hindu Kush and to the east of the Caspian is a region of fearful thunderstorms.¹ That the phenomena observed in storms of this kind should not excite the religious imagination of such a people as the Indo-Iranians is hardly to be thought of. That they should recognize the true nature of the phenomena is quite as difficult to believe, however, no matter to what extent their worship of these manifestations of the power of nature may have been developed. How, then, did they worship the lightning?

According to my own belief, it was in three ways. First, as a smiting fire god, the Avestan Verethraghna, the Vedic Agni Vṛtrahan, but of this more at another time; second, as a wonderful, brilliant 'water-sprite,' the Apām Napāt of this paper; and, lastly, as a heavenly manifestation, to which, for lack of a better name, they gave the title 'Third,' Vedic Trita, who is probably to be recognized in the highly anthropomorphic Avestan Thraetaona Āthwja.

If, now, a careful study be made of the epithets used, in both the Avestan and the Vedic literature, of Apām Napāt, it will appear that every one of them readily adjusts itself to the homage which a primitive people might be expected to give to such a phenomenon as the distant, descending bolt, or the falling ball of fire, which is sometimes called 'chain-lightning.'² That they

¹ Even if the view be accepted that the original home of Apām Napāt was regarded as the river Aras (see Mr. Gray's article, cited above, p. 29), the position taken in this paper will in no wise be invalidated.

² So called because, to the popular fancy, it resembles a chain hanging from heaven to earth, the waving line being suggestive of links. Many, however, use the term of 'zigzag lightning,' and it is frequently so defined, the falling

should call it the 'Child of the Waters' is also perfectly natural; for, in the first place, it practically never appears except with the rain. I have seen many such bolts; and yet I can remember but a single one, in all my experience, which fell when there was no rain, and that one I did not see myself, though I know that it struck a chimney on a building only a quarter of a mile away from where I was at the time, a fact which might better ally it with the smiting god, Agni. Again, as is well known—it is, in fact, a commonplace among the weather-wise—thunderstorms are wont to follow the water-courses, possibly because water is such an excellent conductor of electricity. This tendency to follow the water-courses simply means, of course, that the most violent part of the storm spends itself in the river valleys or over the lakes. In other words, the phenomenon known as 'chain-lightning,' i. e. the bolt that seems to connect heaven and earth, is most common where there are bodies of water. I have watched such bolts over the lake at Chicago, I have seen them over Lake Winnepesaukee, I have observed them from the Ossipees in the distant Pemigewasset Valley, I have seen them over the lake at Bay View, Michigan, and I have watched them in the Kennebec Valley in Maine; but I have seldom seen them on the Prairies, or the Plains, away from the streams, although I have spent about eighteen years in the West, including the States of Iowa, Illinois, Colorado, and South Dakota. During a nine-years residence in Iowa, most of the time some twenty miles from the nearest stream, I knew of but one building that was struck by lightning—namely, the one mentioned above which had its chimney damaged;—and yet the storms were at times terrific. As a rule, Trita was the only god in evidence. Occasionally, however, a descending bolt could be seen in the distance; and I can remember one, at the time of the tornado at Grinnell, which was clearly not in the neighborhood of some stream, i. e. it was too near to the town to be regarded as falling in the river valley which lay in

ball of fire being called 'ball-lightning.' In this paper the term is used in that popular sense which includes 'ball-lightning,' when seen at a distance, and also any other distant bolt which descends directly from the clouds to the earth. It seems to be the most convenient way of including any and all distant bolts which pass directly from the clouds to the earth in an approximately straight line, and it was to all such bolts that I believe the expression *apām napāt* was applied, since a distinction could not possibly have been made between them by the Indo-Iranians.

that direction. In this connection it may be well to mention two photographs which are in my possession. One of them, taken by a friend, is the picture of a bolt which seemed to descend directly into Lake Winnepesaukee, as did two other similar ones that preceded it.¹ The other is a photograph of a bolt, taken in Baltimore, which appeared to descend directly into Chesapeake Bay.

While the supposed land of the Indo-Iranians has lost most of its streams and lakes, and, with them, a large part of its rainfall, which may once have been heavy in places, as it is in our own Mississippi Valley, assuredly the nature of lightning has not changed with the lapse of years. What, then, could be more natural than that the distant, descending bolts should come to be associated with the rivers and the lakes into which they seemed to go? or that they should come to be worshiped as the 'Child of the Waters'?

If, now, the worshipers of this deity, as they wandered in the course of time into a land where the lightning was less in evidence, should begin to forget his old appearance while still keeping up the forms of his worship, and should come to associate the god yet more closely with the waters, would it be strange if his attri-

¹ Curiously enough, these three bolts were the only examples of this kind of lightning during the whole course of the storm. They all appeared in the same place! Since this paper was written I have had an opportunity to observe a still more curious phenomenon. While returning from the Thursday evening meeting on May 10, I noticed frequent 'heat-lightning' in the Southwest. From the upper part of my house it became evident that a violent storm was raging in the Missouri Valley, some fifty miles away. The lightning was so incessant that the longest intervals between the flashes did not exceed thirty seconds. It was of endless variety—now lighting up clouds that had been invisible in the moonlight, now leaping from one dark cloud-bank to another, with the peculiar pink tint which characterizes this form of the lightning, and now appearing as a tall, wavy pillar with its base on the earth and its head in the sky. At least thirty bolts of this last variety (I did not begin to count them at once) fell in a short time, and a photographer could have caught fully five sixths of them without moving his camera. The remaining sixth seemed to be located some twenty degrees to the northwest of the others; but they, too, were confined to a single small spot. A few storms like this, among the Indo-Iranians, would have located Apām Napāt as a dweller in that region; for this is the form of the lightning which I believe was worshiped by them under some such name. On the other hand, the pink-tinted bolt of the upper air is the form to which I believe they gave a name corresponding to Trita.

butes should come to be referred to a water god pure and simple? Such a drifting might easily have taken place in one branch of the family, while a closer association with other lightning deities might come to be effected in another.

To my mind, the whole question centres in this simple problem, What starting-point, what phenomenon, what theory gives the simplest and most direct connection with all the facts, doing violence to none, and accommodating itself to each? After many weeks of careful study and deep thought, no other solution appears to me to be so simple and so satisfactory as the supposition that the lightning—misunderstood, to be sure, but still the lightning—was the real basis for all the myths concerning Apām Napāt, in whatever form he may be supposed to have become fixed as a deity, in any branch of the Indo-European family.

With regard to Ποσειδών and Neptune, cited by Mr. Gray, it should be said that the highly anthropomorphic deities of Greece and Rome, though a distinction must be made between the gods of the early Republic and those of the Empire, can be used, at best, only with the greatest caution, for comparative purposes, in matters of this kind. In addition to the natural drifting, which is always inevitable, it must be remembered that the whole viewpoint of the people had changed. Many things had been forgotten completely by the Greeks and by the Romans, the worship of various gods had been amalgamated, new deities had been adopted; and, in each case, what might be called a new pantheon had been evolved from the old and new elements. Traces, roots, fossils there were, in abundance, which went back to the early days; but they were still only traces or roots or fossils, nothing more; and they can not be used with anything like the same confidence, with regard to early conditions, that can be had in the more conservative and more sacredly cherished Veda and Avesta. In short, Greek and Roman mythology should be used, in my opinion, merely as a means for suggesting possible early conditions, rather than as a means for determining what those conditions really were. The Prometheus myth, in some form, appears in various languages; but it is a far different thing in Sanskrit from what it is in Greek, and the two can not be compared at all in detail. The Greek myth has become entirely anthropomorphic, and it would appear that popular etymology, too, has had its full share in warping the original story. Even *Zeús*, in spite of the many traces of the ancient god, is by no

means the Hindu Dyāus; nor yet is Jupiter, though Horace sings

quod latus mundi nebulae malusque
Juppiter urget.—I xxii. 19-20.

By all means let us define our terms, that we may the better understand one another. My own search has been for the actual basis upon which the Hindu and the Iranian rested his faith. It has not been for his opinion of that basis, or for his idea of its nature. These two things, by the way—the actual and the supposed nature of the deity—may in fact be as far apart as the Poles. That would be no inconsistency from the standpoint of the Indo-Iranian worshipers, and this fact must be given its due weight in the final equation.

Assuredly, the Vedic epithets applied to Apām Napāt fit admirably the lightning's bolt in the form known as 'chain-lightning.' They are somewhat as follows: ¹ 'horse-driving-one' (see below); ² 'who shines within the waters (the rain), with-no-need-of-kindlings'; ³ 'driving-horses with skill and vigor' (see below); ⁴ 'rushing agile-one'; ⁵ 'whom stallions swift-as-thought convey' (cf. the English slang phrase 'quicker than chain-lightning'); ⁶ 'water-born' (rain-born); ⁷ 'beaming waters stand round about the beaming shining Apām Napāt'; ⁸ 'purifying waters stream about him'; ⁹ 'with mighty flames, he richly shines, with-no-need-of-kindlings, clothed-in-ghee (clarified-butter), in the waters' (with 'clothed-in-ghee' cf. the yellow color of 'chain-lightning'); ¹⁰ 'the unwavering (unmovable?) god' (cf. the direct fixed course of 'chain-lightning' with the crooked paths of other bolts); ¹¹ 'to the deep-valleys, so-to-speak, he flows forth in the waters (rain)' (cf. the apparent descent of 'chain-lightning' into the valleys in a mountainous country, i. e. into the river valleys, as noted above); ¹² 'his birth (is) in heaven'; ¹³ 'neither hardships nor wrongs can reach the not-to-be-disregarded-one in (his) crude cloud-castles yonder'; ¹⁴ 'Apām Napāt shines far-and-wide, exuberant within the waters (rain) for the giving-of-good to the worshiping-one' (cf. India's dependence upon the rain); ¹⁵ '(he) shines far-and-wide, holy, untiring, with divine flame in the waters (rain)'; ¹⁶ 'erect, clothed with light (lightning), Apām Napāt verily betakes-himself to the bosom of the oblique-ones (the falling rain)'; ¹⁷ 'carrying his pre-eminent majesty, the golden-colored streams rush about (stream about him)' (cf. the bright gleam that always surrounds 'chain-lightning'); ¹⁸ 'of-a-golden-

color, gold-like (is) that Apām Napāt, and he (is) even golden ; from a golden home (birthplace) letting-himself-down, bestowing-gold, he gives food to this-one (the singer)'; ¹⁹ 'his face increases, and (so does) the dear sacred form (name) of Apām Napāt' (cf. the bolt as it increases in length while descending); ²⁰ 'Apām Napāt, whose-color-can-not-be-blotted-out, with the body of another, so-to-speak, (fire?) is active here (on earth)'; ²¹ 'bringing to their son ghee as food, the swiftly-streaming Waters of-their-own-accord (him) with veils conceal (fly about), (while) standing on this highest station, ever shining with undimmed (rays).'

The Vedic passages, given in the same order, as shown by the superior figures, are as follows: ¹ *āṣuhēmā*, vii. 47, 2; ² *yó anidhmó dīdayad apsv āntār*, x. 30, 4; ³ *āṣuhēmā dhiyā śāmi*, ii. 31, 6; ⁴ *rāspināsyāyōh*, i. 122, 4; ⁵ *manojūvo vīṣaṇo yāñ vāhanti*, i. 186, 5; ⁶ *nādyó*, ii. 35, 1; and, from the same hymn,

⁷ *tām ū śúcīñ śúcayo dīdivāñsam apām nāpātam pári tasthur āpah*. 3.

⁸ *tām* *marmṛjyāmānāḥ pári yanty āpah*,

⁹ *sá śukrēbhīḥ śikvabhī revád asmé dīdāyānidhmó ghr̥tānirñig apsú*. 4.

¹⁰ *avyathyāya* *devāya*

¹¹ *kṛtā ivópa hí prasarsré apsú* 5.

¹² *jānimāsyá ca svār*

¹³ *āmāsu pūrśu paró apramṛṣyāñ nārātayo ví naśan nāñtāni*. 6.

¹⁴ *só apām nāpād ūrjáyann apsv āntār vasudéyāya vidhaté ví bhāti*. 7.

¹⁵ *yó apsv á śúcīnā dāivyena ṛtāvājasra urviyá vibhāti*, 8.

¹⁶ *apām nāpād á hy ásthād upásthañ jihmānām ūrdhvó vidyútāñ vāsānāḥ*,

¹⁷ *tásya jyēṣṭham mahimānāñ vāhantīr hiraṇyavarṇāḥ pári yanti yāhvīḥ*. 9.

¹⁸ *hiraṇyarūpāḥ sá hiraṇyasamdr̥g apām nāpāt séd u hiraṇya-varṇāḥ*,

hiraṇyāyāt pári yóner niśádhyā hiraṇyadā dadaty ánnam asmāi. 10.

¹⁹ *tád asyāñkam utá cāru nāmāpīcyāñ vardhate náptur apām*, 11.

²⁰ *só apām nāpād ānabhīmātavarṇo 'nyásyevehá tanvā viveṣa*. 13.

²¹ *asmin padé paramé tasthivāñsam adhvasmābhir viṣvāhā dīdivāñsam*,

āpo náptre ghr̥tām ānnāñ vāhantīḥ svayām átkāiḥ pári dīyanti yāhvīḥ. 14.

These are the passages upon which the study of Apām Napāt in the Rig-Veda (JAOS., vol. XIX, pp. 137-44) was based; but, striking as these passages are, it was not from the Veda at all that I first got the impression that Apām Napāt was the phenomenon known as 'chain-lightning': it was from the Avesta. As a matter of fact, the study of Apām Napāt just cited was made for the sole purpose of discovering whether the Vedic god would give any support to the conception which I had already formed of the Avestan one; for it was while making a study of the Avestan deity for comparative purposes, that the idea first came to me that the epithets used of this god could be explained by supposing that they were applied to 'chain-lightning.'

In the first place, Darmesteter, in his translation of the Avesta, renders epithets which are repeatedly used of the divinity, by the expressions 'the tall lord,' 'the swift-horsed, the tall and shining lord,' etc. (Sacred Books of the East, vol. XXIII, pp. 5, 6, 14, 36, 38, etc.); while Mills, in his completion of the work, uses the renderings 'lofty,' 'brilliant,' 'glittering-one,' etc. (SBE., vol. XXXI, pp. 197, 204, 219, 319, 326, etc.). These expressions certainly fit 'chain-lightning' quite as well as those cited from the Veda do; and, when the bold figures which characterize an Oriental tongue are remembered, the expression 'swift-horsed' is singularly happy for depicting the rapid descent of the lightning's bolt.

Again, there is a passage in Yasht xix. 51 which Mr. Gray (p. 26) renders as follows: "this Glory got the start unto the sea Vourukasha. Straightway the Child of the Waters, whose steeds are swift, seized it, and this was the wish of the Child of the Waters, whose steeds are swift: I shall seize this Glory, the Unattainable, at the bottom of the deep sea, at the bottom of the profound lakes." Now, to my mind, this is simply a highly colored and decidedly poetic description of a natural phenomenon which I have observed again and again in connection with 'chain-lightning.' At times there comes a flash with a sort of preliminary bolt, which is scarcely noticed. This is instantly followed by a brilliant, gleaming bolt which seems to rush, like a stream of liquid fire, straight to the earth or into some body of water. It comes just where the first flash appeared, and lingers much longer than ordinary bolts do. Moreover, it seems suggestive, even to a dull Western imagination, of something pouncing upon something else, so peculiar is the effect of the brilliant flash following closely

upon the heels of the first, milder one. It is as though a great stream of giant sparks leaped from one electrode to another in swift succession. While this phenomenon is comparatively rare in the East, it can often be seen in certain parts of the West.¹

Now, it is generally agreed that the 'Glory' of the passage quoted is light of some sort. It 'gets the start into the sea,' i. e. there comes a preliminary flash, probably over the Caspian; then 'the Child of the Waters seizes it,' i. e. the second brilliant flash or bolt pounces after the first; and, lastly, he 'wishes to seize it at the bottom of the sea,' or, in other words, the bolt seems to fall into the Caspian.² This, to be sure, is very figurative language, and yet it is not more so than the forms of speech which our own American Indians are constantly using on formal occasions. Indeed, their speeches sometimes excite the derision of the newspapers because of this very feature.³ But, if painted savages are capable of such forms of speech, why should the figures used by the old Aryan 'shepherds,' in the Vedas and the Avesta, seem strange? It is hardly necessary, perhaps, to call attention to the fact that the Avesta represents the incident just referred to as taking place during the battle of Âtar, 'Fire,' and Azhi Dahaka (the Avestan sky-dragon), i. e. in the midst of a thunderstorm.

The section next following (loc. cit., 52), Mr. Gray renders: "We praise the lofty, lordly Child of the Waters, (genius) of women, brilliant, whose steeds are swift, virile, hearing prayer,

¹ There were three such bolts during the short time that I was watching the storm mentioned above in a footnote. It is what is technically called 'ball-lightning' or 'globe-lightning,' and when seen near at hand appears like a falling ball of fire.

² After this paper was in type, the position which it advocates was strikingly confirmed by an item in *The Bath (Maine) Independent* of July 21, 1900, which published on its third page, under the heading 'Saw It Strike,' the following statement: "During a thunder shower that passed over Boothbay harbor Tuesday evening John G. Reed and his wife of Woolwich were at their cottage on the Southport shore, their sloop yacht being moored on the stream near by. They had the front door open and Capt. Reed was outside. He had just remarked that the storm was over when a flash of vivid light and a tremendous thunder clap occurred together and the lightning bolt struck the salt water between the boat and the house. There was a hissing sound and then John observed 'That was a pretty big rocket!'"

³ A fairly good example of what is meant may be found in the translation of a speech quoted from *The Christian Advocate* of March, 1833, by Mr. O. W. Nixon, in his book entitled 'How Marcus Whitman Saved Oregon,' pp. 52-3.

who created men, who shaped men, the angel beneath the Waters, who hath the most attentive ear when he is praised." But the word *upāpō*, which is rendered "beneath the Waters," means rather 'in,' 'within,' or 'near the waters,' in spite of Greek *ὑπὸ*; for the prevailing sense of *upa* is not 'beneath.' It commonly means 'at,' 'on,' 'in,' 'near,' 'by,' etc. 'Chain-lightning' might naturally be called 'the angel (praiseworthy-one) within-the-waters' by such a people; and the use of the word *ap*, 'water,' for rain, in both Sanskrit and Zend, is simply a parallel to the Greek *ὑδωρ*, and *ὑδωρ πολύ*.

The rest of the passage contains nothing that militates against the assumption that 'chain-lightning' is meant. The statement that he hears prayer so freely, doubtless has reference to the surprising effects that follow a rain- or thunderstorm in any country devoid of forests. The other epithets, i. e. those which have not already been touched upon, are all of so similar a nature that they can be disregarded, with the exception of a single one—namely, the word *khṣathrim*. This word is said to be found only in the Avesta, and to be used of Apām Napāt alone. Its meaning, fixed by translations like the Sanskrit *svāmī nārīṇām* (or *strīṇām*), is 'lord of women.' This is regarded by some scholars as an evidence that the deity in question was "the symbol of the fructifying principle contained in the waters." See Mr. Gray's article, p. 38. But the symbolism of these people was concrete, not abstract, in its very essence; and it was often startlingly realistic, so realistic, in fact, that it can not be reproduced in modern speech, except by paraphrases or euphemisms. Witness on the Hindu side, for example, the 'parents' of Agni, and the native idea of fire-getting, or the ritual attending the 'consecration' of the 'twice-born,' or the rites still used in celebrating the Durgāpujā, 'worship of Durga,' not to mention those of the Pūrṇābhiṣeka, 'complete consecration.' If Apām Napāt is to be regarded as a water deity on the basis of this epithet, it can only be in the sense that he produced (gave forth) the waters (rain); for no other possible meaning can be in keeping with Indo-Iranian methods of thought.¹ The idea that the deity was "the

¹ Cf. Yasht viii. 4, cited by Mr. Gray, p. 25, "from the Child of the Waters doth come the seed" (*cithrem*). The Sanskrit contains various similar passages, though there is often a double sense to be observed, as where rain and Soma, or rain as Soma, must be kept in mind. For example: 'let Apām Napāt, the horse-driver, set-in-motion (favor), O Waters, your wave most sweet,' *tām*

symbol of the fructifying principle contained in the waters" may be a beautiful thought; but it is essentially modern, and bears none of the earmarks of Indo-Iranian ways of looking at such matters. It is of course possible to take this statement in a concrete sense; but that at once raises the question, What was the natural phenomenon, since that was what they worshiped, which was regarded as a symbol of this fructifying power? It must have been something. What was it? What else is there to which it can be so simply and naturally referred as the lightning? As the god who sent forth the waters (the rain) to bring life to every green thing on the earth, he would, naturally enough, be the 'lord of women,' as they viewed these things. But, if he is a water god on this basis, the same old question still confronts us: What was the thing or phenomenon which was regarded as sending forth the rain? There is but one natural answer: The lightning; for the outburst of rain follows it, along with the thunder. As a matter of fact, the downpour is especially noticeable after the bolts commonly called 'chain-lightning,' and it does not require a very active imagination to see how suggestive to the minds of these people the sudden appearance of a pillar of waving fire, followed by the pouring rain, might be.

In no case can an abstract symbolism be admitted for the Indo-Iranians, where a concrete one is possible. They did not think in that way, were not capable of it, in fact, except to a very limited extent, any more than other ancient races; and it will not do to read modern Western ideas into ancient Eastern expressions, no matter how alluring the temptation may be. Moreover,

ūrmīm āpo mādhumattamañ vo 'pām nāpād avatv ācuhēmā, R.V. vii. 47, 2; 'let him give to you to-day the beautifully clarified wave,' *śd vo dadad ūrmīm adyā sūpūtām*, x. 30, 3; 'O Apām Napāt, give sweet waters,' *āpām nāpān mādhumatir apō dā*, x. 30, 4; and, of the same general import, 'Apām Napāt, the good, by the glory (greatness) of his godhead (asuraship) begot all creatures,' *apām nāpād asuryāsa mahnā vīcāny aryō bhūvanā jajāna*, ii. 35, 2. The 'glory of his godhead' may possibly refer to the impression of greatness produced upon the mind of the worshiper by the lightning's glare. The Sanskrit commentary on Yaçna i. 5, cited by Mr. Gray, p. 23, must be taken in the same general way, i. e. concretely. He renders it: "the lord Burja is the angel of women: his nature is water, that is, he is the unadulterated source; from him is the very navel of the waters, even as whence—from him—is the seed of the water named Arvand, by which are produced the most beautiful horses." The passage commented on is rendered "I invoke, I propitiate the lofty, lordly Child of the Waters"; while the Sanskrit parallel is given as "I invoke, I propitiate the lord Burja, navel of the Waters."

the difference between modern ideas of taste and those of the ancient world must still be reckoned with, even if ancient ideas, in some cases, seem strange to us, not to say positively repulsive; and it must not be forgotten that forms of speech which are impossible in modern society were a commonplace not only in the life and literature of the ancient Hindus and other contemporary races, but also among our own ancestors not many centuries ago.

If, then, Apām Napāt is regarded as the god who gave forth the rain, and is, for that reason, considered a water god, well and good. He may also be looked upon as a water god because of the close association of 'chain-lightning' with the rain and with large bodies of water; but his essential characteristics as a form of the lightning remain untouched, or rather, are rendered even more certain by this very fact.

In conclusion, it may be safe to infer, first, that the Indo-Iranian god called the 'Child of the Waters' was nothing more nor less than 'chain-lightning'; for he has retained distinct evidences of such an original nature in both the Rik and the Avesta. It may also be safe to assume, in the second place, that his nature was still unchanged when the Gāthās and the hymns were composed, but that it had faded somewhat, in each case, by the time they were compiled. It seems clear, in the third place, that this fading continued in each instance until the Vedic god came to be associated with, or practically absorbed by, Agni in the Sanskrit ritual, while the old association of Apām Napāt and Ātar in the Avesta was quite lost sight of in the Avestan ritual. Cf. Mr. Gray's article, pp. 32-3. That the two were associated in the Avesta, however, is clear, since it does not rest merely on the fact that they are so often mentioned close together; for the passage cited above, in which Ātar fights with the sky-dragon for the 'Glory,' while the 'Child of the Waters' seizes it, evidently as his helper, can not be disposed of by the ritual. But, when this drifting was once started, it is difficult to say where it might end; and it may well be that characteristics of this god appear in Greek and Roman mythology, although this puts the god still further back into Aryan times, and allows for even greater changes than any that have yet been considered.

For my own part, I am quite willing to believe that the god was Aryan. Agni, in some form, must have been Aryan, as is shown by Latin *ignis*. Ātar must have been Indo-Iranian, as is

shown by Sanskrit athar-van and Athar-va-Veda, and he too may have been Aryan, possibly the original 'spook-killer.' This would allow Agni to be somewhat neutral in the beginning, and might account for Latin *ignis*. If Agni then gradually assumed the functions of the 'spook-killer,' and took an addition to his name in this character, a thing common enough later on, Agni Vṛtrahan and Verethraghna could be accounted for, and the dropping of *Athar would also be explained, even if Ātar did survive. It would then only be necessary for Agni to develop in his character as 'Fire,' while losing his accidental pre-eminence as the 'slayer of Vṛtra,' to allow Indra Vṛtrahan, the comparatively late Hindu god, to find a place in the pantheon. All this is mere conjecture, of course; but the field is an open one, and the nature of the problem is such that many a guess must be ventured before any satisfactory basis of belief can be reached.

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